

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN  
SOUTHERN DIVISION

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KENNETH R. KOAN,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	Case No. 4:05-cv-45
	)	
v.	)	Honorable Robert Holmes Bell
	)	
MDOC,	)	
	)	
Defendant.	)	
	)	

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**OPINION**

This is a civil rights action brought by a state prisoner pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The Court has granted Plaintiff leave to proceed *in forma pauperis*. Under the Prison Litigation Reform Act, PUB.L.NO. 104-134, 110 STAT. 1321 (1996) (“PLRA”), the Court is required to dismiss any prisoner action brought under federal law if the complaint is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2), 1915A; 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(c). The Court must read Plaintiff’s *pro se* complaint indulgently, *see Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972), and accept Plaintiff’s allegations as true, unless they are clearly irrational or wholly incredible. *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 33 (1992). Applying these standards, the Court will dismiss Plaintiff’s complaint for failure to state a claim.

## Discussion

### I. Factual allegations

Plaintiff currently is incarcerated in the Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility. In his pro se complaint, he sues the Michigan Department of Correction (“MDOC”). Plaintiff makes the following factual allegations (verbatim):

Indangering a person’s life the MDOC is going against my doctor order by giving me a detail for unit sanditation, my doctor told me not to do any havey yard work or it could put me back in the hospital or put me in my grave all because of asthma attack that I had in 1996 in the winter I can’t even do any havey yard work in the summer because of it and I also was extorted by another prisoner for money that I did not have because that some one told the other prisoner that something was tooked off the unit yard when it was’nt scent I have been down I was assaulted by other’s prisoners at leas five scents I been here at this facility “the MDOC dose not want to do anything about the extortion.”

For relief, Plaintiff seeks an order from the Court requiring the MDOC to cancel his work detail and transfer him to a facility in Indiana where he will be safe. He also seeks monetary damages of at least \$5,000.00.

### II. Immunity

Plaintiff may not maintain a § 1983 action against the MDOC. Regardless of the form of relief requested, the states and their departments are immune under the Eleventh Amendment from suit in the federal courts, if the state has not waived immunity and Congress has not expressly abrogated Eleventh Amendment immunity by statute. *See Pennhurst State School & Hosp. v. Halderman*, 465 U.S. 89, 98-101 (1984); *Alabama v. Pugh*, 438 U.S. 781, 782 (1978); *O’Hara v. Wigginton*, 24 F.3d 823, 826 (6th Cir. 1993). Congress has not expressly abrogated Eleventh Amendment immunity by statute, *Quern v. Jordan*, 440 U.S. 332, 341 (1979), and the State of Michigan has not consented to civil rights suits in federal court. *Abick v. Michigan*, 803 F.2d 874,

877 (6th Cir. 1986). In numerous unpublished opinions, the Sixth Circuit has specifically held that the MDOC is absolutely immune from suit under the Eleventh Amendment. *See, e.g., Turnboe v. Stegall*, No. 00-1182, 2000 WL1679478, at \*2 (6th Cir. Nov. 1, 2000); *Erdman v. Michigan Dep't of Corr.*, No. 94-2109, 1995 WL 150341, at \*1 (6th Cir. April 5, 1995); *Cullens v. Bemis*, No. 92-1582, 1992 WL 337688, at \*1 (6th Cir. Nov. 18, 1992); *Adams v. Michigan Dep't of Corr.*, No. 86-1803, 1987 WL 36006, at \*1 (6th Cir. May 7, 1987). In addition, the State of Michigan (acting through the MDOC) is not a "person" who may be sued under § 1983 for money damages. *See Lapidus v. Board of Regents*, 535 U.S. 613 (2002) (citing *Will v. Michigan Dep't of State Police*, 491 U.S. 58 (1989)). Because the MDOC is immune, Plaintiff's action must be dismissed.

### **Conclusion**

Having conducted the review now required by the Prison Litigation Reform Act, the Court determines that Plaintiff's action fails to state a claim and will therefore be dismissed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2) and 1915A(b), and 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(c).

The Court must next decide whether an appeal of this action would be in good faith within the meaning of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3). *See McGore v. Wrigglesworth*, 114 F.3d 601, 611 (6th Cir. 1997). For the same reasons that the Court dismisses the action, the Court discerns no good-faith basis for an appeal. Should Plaintiff appeal this decision, the Court will assess the \$255 appellate filing fee pursuant to § 1915(b)(1), *see McGore*, 114 F.3d at 610-11, unless Plaintiff is barred from proceeding *in forma pauperis*, e.g., by the "three-strikes" rule of § 1915(g). If he is barred, he will be required to pay the \$255 appellate filing fee in one lump sum.

This is a dismissal as described by 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g).

A Judgment consistent with this Opinion will be entered.

Date: May 10, 2005

/s/ Robert Holmes Bell  
ROBERT HOLMES BELL  
CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE